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Raphael's "Hours."

[The following text to Raphael's Day and Night Hours, translated from the German of Carl Clauss by Anna.C. Brackett, will prove of interest to many of our readers.—ED.]

In the 15th century the Ideas which stirred the Middle Ages, had tired themselves out and a new Time began. In place of inspired belief, appeared, borne by the movement towards renovation which pulsated through all spiritual agitations, the epoch of a no less enthusiastic investigation. This new direction of the time led to the study of antiquity, which opened to the spirit anew the beauty of the world, of sensuous life. For art also was the enthusiasm for the antique, the baptism of regeneration. The Renaissance, as this era of art history is called, arose from a careful study of ancient art. In spite of the heedlessness with which Christian Rome had destroyed the monuments of antiquity for a millennium, there was still a very considerable number of great architectural structures extant. Architecture was the first which assumed the classical Roman style, and so sought to make for itself a new language of forms. Also Sculpture and Painting were drawn into the general movement, and restored after classical models.

With regard to the organism of the composition, or the conformity to law, the Renaissance was behind the art-form of the Middle Ages, and the Gothic, but far excelled them in practical applicability, in variety and manifoldness. While the Gothic plan allowed to the sister arts of Architecture, Sculpture and Painting but little room to display themselves, the architecture of the Renaissance entered into the closest relations with them; a relation which aided the art of Decoration, especially that of inner rooms. Art displayed in this province a richness, a beauty and a harmony which will take captive the sense of all times. Although architecture gave the impulse and created the field on which the arts could work united, it was nevertheless less the architects than the great painters and sculptors who carried this branch of decoration to so beautiful an unfolding, considering which, we must remember that the greatest painters of the XVth century were also sculptors and architects.

The noblest improvement in the decorative style in painting, is to be ascribed to the universal genius of Raphael. The examples which he had at Rome, the painted decorations of different rooms in the Vatican, &c., furnished the first direction, and the antique paintings showed to the artist the way to the most correct solution of that sort of examples.

Already in Florence, during his second residence in his native city of Urbino, at the court of Duke Guidobaldo, the Italian Charles Augustus, the newly discovered Literature, Philosophy and Poetry had met him, but in the capitol of Christendom in Rome the whole nobility of art of the ancient world was revealed to him. Numerous monuments of the olden time were here preserved. The baths of

Titus, just discovered, allowed one to guess at their magnificence. The Laocoön group, the Apollo Belvidere, the Torso of Hercules, as well as many other celebrated works of art, had, at that time, been found. Supported by his old friends, the antiquary Andreas Fulvio, and the Count Castiglione, Raphael plunged into the study of antiquity, and the care with which he watched over the disinterment of, and sought to preserve, the fragments of art of the old world, saved from the ruins in Rome, bears witness to the devotion and enthusiasm for the ancient art, which he, as well as Michael Angelo, placed far above their own. There witnesses to this also, the project which he had so long in mind of drawing the full plan of ancient Rome, and of representing the old buildings in ground plan and elevation. This study widened Raphael's views and purified his style, which, thenceforward, showed itself free from the confusion and one-sidedness of the style of the Middle Ages. This impulse, which was received through the antique, did not show itself in Raphael's works as a learned enthusiasm, but as the progress of a soul filled with beauty. Nowhere is his drawing dependent on the antique; it does not stand under it, but, as guarding its independence, above it. Always, even when he deals with an antique subject, he remains Raphael and the child of his time, while his seizing is more individual and has a warmer picturesqueness than those of antiquity. Finding the right proportion of the relation between standard beauty with that of the individual, the transition between the Christian art and the antique, is perfectly found in Raphael: the balancing of these two great contradictions of the painting and plastic styles, around which the magnetic needle of art-history is always vibrating. In the fact that in Raphael's works, content and form are the same (or, perfectly correspond), and that the subject matter becomes a truly artistic motive, is to be found the reason why, in all times, the beauty of his works is comprehensible, and why every heart, without consideration of religious belief, warms at their contemplation. While in the great historical and ecclesiastical representations of Raphael, there is always an excess of *thought* over the *form*, in the ancient myths, a subject offered itself to the painter, in which his sense of form undimmed and pure could revel. Often, and willingly, his fancy plunged into the sea of Grecian beauty and, in its warm, dazzling play, relieved itself from the earnest philosophical tasks which were set forth in the moulds of his art. And even in these moulds for embossed work and tapestries, his overflowing fancy finds in the myth and allegory the elements in which he can let the themes of his great pictures, in the richest interrelation, spread themselves out in a playful manner, and harmoniously die away. In this sort of architectural, fantastic form-play in the arabesque, whose design was for the border and surrounding of great historical paintings, or the adornment of certain rooms, in one word, in decorative painting, there was unfolded in Raphael an art which, in its richness and obedience to the form of composition, as well as in its wonderful combination of style and natural truth in drawing, will remain for all ages a standard.

Many of Raphael's sketches for this sort of wall-decorations, have come down to us only in the form of copies by his scholars, or of drawings or engravings. To these last belong the well-known allegorical representations of the Hours of Raphael. These are supposed to be part of the decorations entitled "The All-Conquering Power of Love," in a room of the Vatican (the so-called bath-room of Cardinal Bibbiena); in the same way they are said to have been drawn in the Villa Spada on the Palatine Hill. But now no trace of these paintings is to be found in either of these places. And, moreover, there is nothing known as to where the originals were found from which these copies were engraved. Later, the composition, as also the engravings, were ascribed to Raphael. Since then they were, at least by his deserving biographer, Passavant, accredited to the pupils of the great master. But Passavant does not seem to be very reliable, for he takes pictures as copies of the antique in the museum at Naples, which are real pictures from Pompeii, an opinion which he modifies afterward in a later edition of his book. But be this as it may, the compositions, as a whole, bear the stamp of Raphael's genius, and show his way of seizing the subjects, impressed, as he was, with his study of the antique; and we assume that for most of the pictures Raphael's designs were used. At any rate, they are not unworthy, for the most part, of the name of the great master. They depict the poetical states of mind which the different hours of the day and night awaken in men. The bearers of these moods, twelve floating female forms, are clearly distinguishable in character, and wonderfully thought out in form; their grace of posture is full of action, and their hovering is most delicately expressed in the motion of the body and drapery.

These representations do not adopt our division of the hours, but that of the Orientals, according to which the day, from sunrise to sunset, was divided into six hours; and the night, from sunset to sunrise, in the same way. With high-held torch, awaking the sleepers, comes in swift flight the first hour of day, lightly draped and joyous—in the loose folds of her robe the roses with which she daily adorns the eastern gate of heaven. A beaming smile on her lips, in restful, serene grace, floats in the morning, in full splendor, in the second picture, over the awakened earth. A noble figure, entirely in Raphael's style, forms the third picture, which, in freshest fullness of life, descends under the sign of Jupiter—the shining one who rules in the richness of light. The censer denotes the offering to be brought to the god. The figure with the sun-dial, the fourth, shows the afternoon hours. In the fifth picture the day is seen departing, and, as in the glow of the twilight, smiling back on us, carrying in her left hand the fruit of her creation, a bunch of grain, while her right points toward the rising light of night—the moon—to whom she must relinquish her sovereignty. In the sixth picture, at last, floats in the twilight, in one hand holding a nosegay, the flower-greeting of Love, in the other a bat, the symbol of the joyous train of wavering imaginations. In muffled flight, bringing the sleep-inducing poppy-

heads, and with the owl, there draws near the first hour of night. A long, many-folded robe veils modestly the figure, and the beautiful face glows mild as the star-light with an expression of dreaming, of longing, and of the faintly-remembered pleasure of the day. The planet rising over the head of the figure in the background, is the malicious Mars, betokening the many evils which threaten mankind during the night. The second representation is devoted to the flight of time, to the thought of the past which comes to the soul in the still hours of the night, and we see a hastily passing figure, with an hour-glass held on high. Silent, sheltering under the thick veil of her dark raiment the dismal animals of night, floats up the midnight under the sign of Saturn, the harmful Saturn,

“Who the secret
Birth of things in the bosom of the earth
And in the depths of the soul, controls;
And rules over all that the light avoids.”

The friendly aspect of night as the fountain of the joy of love and as the source, at the same time, of poetical unfoldings, is shown in the picture inscribed to the fourth hour of night. Under the benignant star of Venus appears to us a form of beauty, the owl on her arm is here the bird of Minerva, and betokens the secrets of wisdom, which discover themselves to the inspired seeker in the stillness of night. The fifth hour of the night is represented as pouring the dew out; while, finally, the sixth hour, a winged figure, represents the sweet pictures, which the dreams of the morning bring. Over her head twinkles Mercury which, in the morning twilight, goes before the appearance of the sun, and taking powerful possession of the soul-life of men, leads joyous dream-forms to the bed of the sleeper. But Mercury is also the mediator between the earth and the lower world, and accompanies the souls of the dead to the ferry-man of Acheron, to their last rest. And we can well in this last picture find still a deeper meaning in the beautiful figure. Is it not Psyche loosed from the many weights of the body upward floating, returning to her everlasting home. The butterfly wings of the figure, the singing swan on her arm denote still more. According to the old idea (Plato's), the swan sings her last song more joyfully than all others, for she sings it with the consciousness that she is going after death to a better life, and to possess the God whose servant she is.

In the little pictures at the base, decorated with animals, the meaning of the large figures can be farther traced, and it will not be without interest to follow out the concealed meaning. The swan (Day 1), the tortoise (Day 1), the dove (Day 2), the ram (Day 4), are here the animals sacred to Aphrodite. The bristly animal (Night 4) and the panther betoken the double nature of love; as well as the snake teasing squirrel (Night 1), its play with jealousy; farther, the altar wound round with a snake (Day 5), prosperity or health. The lizard before the urn (Night 1) containing diseases, evil dreams, &c., is the

good angel of the sleeper. The tripod with a flame and watched by a cock (Night 6), is the altar of the Penates, the symbol of peaceful home-life. The meaning of the owl, the bird of the night which flies away from before the emblems of the arts, as well as the other animals with which the fancy of the painter plays, is easily seen.

The arrangement of the pictures, their representation of the figures on a dark background, is that of the Pompeian wall paintings. They are conceived in the spirit of the antique, yet the main thing is not alone in the contour, in the beauty of the lines of the motion, but also in the whole painting of the form, which is more according to nature than that of the antique. Several figures which really show the common style of the Roman school, are, it is not to be denied, merely figures to fill up a space. Nevertheless, these do not disturb the total impression of the pictures, which in the amount of beauty they hold in most of the figures, offer a rich fountain of art-enjoyment. The above-mentioned copper-plates are seldom seen, and it appeared to be a trustworthy undertaking of the Brockmann studio to acquaint the public with these graceful compositions by means of photography. Without wishing to give these pictures any meaning of our own which is not in them, we desired only to give to the spectator a few hints.

On The Dialectic.

Our correspondent, N. L. H., from East Toronto, Canada, writes : "One word in your journal has to me been vague and obscure from the very first. I refer to the term 'dialectic.' In your 'Introduction to Philosophy' it is spoken of as being too difficult for an elementary treatise, or words to that effect. Mahan calls it 'The doctrine of fallacies,' which only stirs up the darkness. Hegel's Logic is said to contain a peculiar 'dialectic,' or an infallible "dialectic": Some writers have contrasted the 'dialectic' with the analytic system, but all leave the word literally undefined. Yet it 'hops up' and 'crops out' in almost every chapter of the JOURNAL. In one place it seems to be a sort of mental evolution by which the cocoon is carefully unwound till the silken egg of truth appears. Again, it seems a sort of third act or effort of the mind to establish a mean between analysis and synthesis; but it is generally referred to as a specific style, mode or rule of directing mental forces, and if such be the case, then the word 'dialectic' ought to be susceptible of such a direct definition or illustration as will make it plain.

"With the notes before me, I can very readily learn any tune, but I cannot learn a tune by hearing others sing it, unless I can see the notes, because no two 'rote' singers sing alike when separately singing what they call the same tune. Just so with the word 'dialectic,' from its use in the JOURNAL OF SPECULATIVE PHILOSOPHY a dozen definitions may be deduced, all agreeing in the main, yet no two